

Leeds Beckett University

Annual statement on research integrity

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	Leeds Beckett University
1B. Type of organisation:	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body	14 November 2025 (Audit Committee)
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/research-and-information-governance/research-integrity-ethics-misconduct/
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Silke Machold (PVC Research & Innovation)
	Email address: S.Machold@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Name: Charlotte Pettitt (Research Integrity & Ethics Manager)
	Email address: c.c.pettitt@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture.

Description of actions and activities undertaken

2A. Description of current systems and culture

This report provides an overview of initiatives undertaken during academic year 2024/25 to support and enhance integrity in research, in accordance with the requirements of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

➤ Policies and systems

Leeds Beckett University (LBU) has in place policies, procedures, and systems to ensure research is conducted to the highest standards. The LBU Code of Good Practice in Research provides the overarching guidance, with the Research Ethics Policy and Research Ethics Procedures setting out the approach to and process for conducting ethics reviews. The Research Ethics online approval system is used by staff and students for ethical approval. The Policy and Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research ensure we fulfil commitment four of the Concordat.

All policies are benchmarked against sector guidance including UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the UK Research Integrity Office's (UKRIOs) Code of Practice for Research, and the UKRIO/ Association of Research Managers & Administrators (ARMA) Research Ethics Support Review and are periodically revised and updated.

➤ Communications and engagement

Policies and procedures related to research integrity are communicated through a range of mechanisms:

- Induction programmes for colleagues and research students introducing the University's Strategic Planning Framework, regulations and policies, and access to resources and training.
- Research governance webpages are updated with the latest information and resources, alongside a dedicated link to Research Integrity, Ethics and Misconduct webpages.
- The Research Student Handbook outline the University's expectations for good research practice and signposts resources and guidance.
- Training on subject-related ethics and use of the ethics systems is provided in Schools. In addition, a University-wide Researcher Development Programme is offered which includes open and responsible research and research integrity training.
- Monthly communications are sent to a list of nearly 700 members, highlighting policy updates, training opportunities, and events.
- Research & Enterprise Blogs are published on a regular basis and provide an opportunity for more in-depth communications on a range of research topics including research integrity, sustainable development goals and research ethics.

To facilitate two-way communication and engagement of researchers, a Research Community Teams group, with nearly 400 members, is used to exchange key information,

policy updates, events, and training within our research community.

We monitor uptake of these communications via usage data and through surveys such as Culture, Employment and Development of Academic Researchers (CEDARS).

➤ **Culture, development, and leadership**

The University's **Strategic Planning Framework 2021-26** sets out the key themes of 'Excellent Educational Outcome' and 'Excellent Research & Innovation', along with our University values. The Research & Knowledge Exchange Plan has three key pillars: 1) excellent research and KE 2) people and research culture, and 3) sustainable research and KE. As part of the second pillar and under our commitments to the HR Excellence in Research Award, the University has in place actions to further support creating a research environment that nurtures good research practices and a culture of research integrity.

The University's **Code of Good Practice for Research** sets the responsibilities of the University, its senior colleagues and all researchers for creating a climate in which research is undertaken that safeguards good research practice. Researchers are encouraged and supported to undertake appropriate continuous professional development, and take up mentoring, across all aspects of research activity.

➤ **Monitoring and reporting**

Responsibility for research integrity at the University is via the following governance structure:

- The **Academic Board (ACB)** is the parent committee for academic activities and is responsible for overseeing and regulating general issues relating to research, scholarship, teaching and courses at the University. The ACB considers the Annual Statement on Research Integrity, and all policies and procedures related to ethics and research integrity.
- The **University Research and Enterprise Committee (UREC)** reports to the ACB for regarding the University's research, enterprise, other scholarly activity and the provision of research degrees. UREC receives and approves the Annual Research & KE Report which includes our work on people and culture, open research, and research integrity. UREC also receives reports from its sub-committees.
- The **University Research Ethics Sub-Committee (URESC)** is responsible to the Research and Enterprise Committee for overseeing the development and implementation of our University's policy and procedures relating to research ethics. It receives annual research ethics audit reports from the schools setting out their compliance with the Research Ethics Policy and Procedures.
- The **School Research Ethics Forums / Committees** are responsible for maintaining oversight of research ethics at School level and report to both the University Research Ethics Sub-Committee and the School Research & Knowledge Exchange Committees.
- The **Audit Committee (AUD)** has delegated responsibilities from the Board of Governors to monitor the University's risk from misconduct in research, and to approve the Annual Statement on Research Integrity.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Please provide an update on any changes made during the period, such as new initiatives, training, developments, also ongoing changes that are still underway. Drawing on Commitment 3 of the Concordat, please note any new or revised policies, practices, and procedures to support researchers; training on research ethics and research integrity; training and mentoring opportunities to support the development of researchers' skills throughout their careers.

In 2024/25, work focused on the following areas:

➤ Policies & Guidance, Systems

- **Research Policy:** Updates were made to the Policy and Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research to reflect the revised Concordat to Support Research Integrity, new sector guidance and any changes in University's structure that were implemented in 2024/25. The Research Ethics Policy and Research Ethics Procedures were updated to ensure they reflected sector guidance, changes in University structure, and alignment with the new Worktribe Ethics system. The University's Due Diligence Policy for Research Partners was reviewed and re-approved to reference the new Foreign Influence Registration Scheme (FIRS), which came into effect on 1st July 2025.
- **Research Ethics System:** The new online WorkTribe Ethics System has been successfully implemented, launching across the institution in September 2025. The new system will transform activity in this area, providing increased compliance with institutional and sector policy through a more robust, efficient, and effective application process, along with improved reporting function to assure compliance.
- The University's Code of Good Practice for Research was updated in July 2025 to ensure alignment with the revised version of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and to reference the new Foreign Influence Registration Scheme (FIRS), which came into effect on 1st July 2025.
- The Terms of Reference for School Research and Knowledge Exchange Committees were amended to ensure that there is a clear and formal reporting line between them and the School Research Ethics Forum/Committees more robust. Schools remain able to exercise their discretion over the formation of the Ethics Forum/Committee as they see fit for their area or discipline.

➤ External collaboration & Compliance

- **Foreign Influence Registration Scheme (FIRS):** The Foreign Influence Registration Scheme (FIRS) came into force on 01 July 2025. FIRS protects the safety and interests of the UK by improving the understanding of activity taking place in the UK at the instruction of a foreign state or certain foreign state-controlled organisations. An institutional audit of current research activity in relation to FIRS was completed in the summer of 2025. No registerable activity was identified but monitoring processes are now in place. All staff training has been scheduled on 25 Nov 2025 and 12 Feb 2026 to support awareness, along with emails to staff, a blog post, and School Senior Leadership briefings to cascade information to staff.

➤ Researcher Development and Resources

- The Researcher Development Programme was enhanced to include focused training on **research integrity** and **research ethics** to better embed policies and procedures, and respond to sector debates such as use of AI in research. As a subscriber to UKRIO, their Introduction to Research Integrity training module has been and continues to be advertised to all staff and has been taken up by members of our research community.
- In November 2024, we held our second Festival of Research and Knowledge Exchange. Under the theme of 'Evolving Research Culture: Embracing Openness and Collaboration', the two-day event provided interactive sessions on open and transparent research, research integrity, and collaboration in research. The keynote address by Neil Jacobs, Head of UKRN Open Research programme explored the theme of 'Recognising open and transparent research in all its variety'.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

This should include a reflection on the previous year's activity including a review of progress and impact of initiatives if known relating to activities referenced in the previous year's statement. Note any issues that have hindered progress, e.g. resourcing or other issues.

➤ Reflections on progress

Planned actions and initiatives related to policies, procedures and researcher development as are complete.

The University continues to be a signatory of the **San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, known as DORA**, which aims to improve the ways in which researchers and the outputs of scholarly research are evaluated. The University is committed to aligning its research practices with the principles of DORA and ensuring transparency and accountability in assessment processes and the following policies express that commitment: **Responsible Research Statement** / **Statement on the Responsible Use of Research Indicators**.

Our alignment with the principles of DORA were used to inform the development of our REF 2029 Code of Practice and our approach to output selection along with consultation with a wide range of colleagues and services across the University.

Having implemented narrative CVs as part of the University's revised academic promotion procedure, we will evaluate the impact of this and how we can design better support for colleagues seeking promotion.

The University continues to participate in the **UKRN's Open and Responsible Researcher Reward and Recognition (OR4) project** as a Community of Practice institution. The Programme aim is to accelerate the uptake of high-quality open research practices, with a focus on making open research rewarded and making it rewarded via the recruitment, promotion, and other recognition activities at institutions that employ researchers. The University also remains an institutional member of UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), a national peer-led consortium that aims to ensure the UK retains its place as a centre for world-leading research by encouraging responsible and reproducible research culture across institutions.

The University became a signatory to the **Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice in April 2025**. The priorities within the concordat align with our own LBU sustainability strategy and the work already being undertaken by colleagues and ties into LBU becoming signatories of the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Action pledge. Communications were sent out to staff about the Concordat including a **blog post**.

An external member joined the URESC to provide the required external representation but became ineligible after being recruited by the University. The University will seek to recruit a new external member to URESC as soon as possible.

➤ **Plans for future development**

Policies, procedures, and systems

The University's **Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research** will be reviewed again at the end of the 2025/26 academic year as updated guidance on a more standardised set of procedures for all HE providers is expected from the UKRIO in early 2026.

A self-assessment against the **Concordat to Support Research Integrity** will be undertaken in 2025/26 following publication of the latest version of the Concordat and receipt of updated guidance for the self-assessment at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. An updated action plan will be presented to UREC in spring 2026.

Roll out of the new Worktribe Ethics system will continue during 2025/26 and feedback will be sought on the performance of, and engagement with, the new system to ensure that it continues to function as expected and to add in any further updates or improvements as required. Training sessions have been held in the run up to the launch with good engagement and will continue to be delivered during 2025/26 to support students and staff using the new system. Extensive guidance and online resources for the new system have been developed and are available **online**.

Implementation of the **WorkTribe Pre-Award and Post-Award modules** is scheduled to commence in November 2025 and will span approximately eight months. The rollout will be phased, beginning with the Pre-Award module followed by the Post-Award and will bring significant improvements to the management and reporting of research at the University.

Information, training, and support

During 2025/26, the University's **webpages** and online information and guidance concerning research integrity will continue to be reviewed to improve the information, guidance and support available for researchers. We will continue to promote the UKRIO training and further use our membership of UKRIO and UKRN to learn from and share sector best practice. This will include training and development in open research practices and interdisciplinary research.

The University maintains a schedule of research policies and procedures that is continually reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant and fit for purpose.

During 2025/26 the University will use the progress made with embedding DORA to explore an application for membership of the **Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)**. CoARA is a collective of organisations committed to reforming the methods and processes by which research, researchers, and research organisations are evaluated.

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct.

3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct.

Please provide:

- a brief summary of relevant organisation policies/ processes (e.g. research misconduct procedure, whistle-blowing policy, bullying/harassment policy; appointment of a third party to act as confidential liaison for persons wishing to raise concerns) and brief information on the periodic review of research misconduct processes (e.g. date of last review; any major changes during the period under review; date when processes will next be reviewed).
- information on how the organisation creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct (e.g. code of practice for research, whistle-blowing, research misconduct procedure, informal liaison process, website signposting for reporting systems, training, mentoring, reflection and evaluation of policies, practices and procedures).
- anonymised key lessons learned from any investigations into allegations of misconduct which either identified opportunities for improvements in the organisation's investigation procedure and/or related policies / processes/ culture or which showed that they were working well.

➤ Summary of relevant organisation policies/ processes

The University has in place a **Policy for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research**. The Policy has been approved by the Academic Board of the University, and along with the **Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research**, provides a framework for investigating allegations of misconduct in research conducted under the auspices of the University.

The University also has the following associated policies and processes in place.

- **LBU Whistleblowing (Public Interests Disclosure) Policy & Procedure**
- **Staff disciplinary procedures**
- **Code of Good Practice for Research**
- **Research Ethics Policy**
- **Research Ethics Procedures**
- **Academic Regulations - Section 10: Academic Integrity**
- **Fitness to Practise Policy**

All policies are normally reviewed on a two-year cycle unless external changes require otherwise. The Policy & Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research were last revised and approved in June 2025 and October 2025 respectively, following benchmarking against UKRIO's guidance and to ensure they remained up to date with associated University practice.

➤ Creating and embedding a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct.

The University makes its policies and procedures available online, embeds them within training frameworks, and has designated contacts and roles centrally and at school level, to provide advice and guidance for colleagues and students. We regularly review and implement any improvements to our practice, arising from any investigations as part of our culture of continuous improvement. The University recognises that raising concerns about misconduct in research can impact the emotional and mental health and wellbeing of all concerned. We therefore signpost complainants and respondents to the University wellbeing support webpages and our Employee Assistance Programme, as well as guidance provided by UKRIO.

➤ Anonymised key lessons learned from any investigations into allegations of misconduct.

- **Management of ethics applications:** The old ethics system had limitations, including inability to of principal and co-investigators to jointly submit and edit applications. The new system, Worktribe, which was piloted in semester 2 2024-25 and launched fully in September 2025, addresses these limitations and has clearer workflows and reporting. This provides improved transparency at different levels of approvals and decision-making.
- **Inter-disciplinary research:** Inter-disciplinary challenge-based research is a core part of our research plan. We need to strengthen development and training opportunities for colleagues to ensure that discipline-specific conventions along with methodological rigour are understood and applied in interdisciplinary research.
- **Open research practices:** The adoption of open research practices supports rigour and reproducibility in research, and colleagues should be better supported to adopt open research practices.
- **Investigation stages and timelines:** There are circumstances where the 'Initial Investigation Stage' may lead to unnecessary complications or delays to investigating allegations of misconduct in research. The Procedures have been amended to make this stage optional.

3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

Please complete the table on the number of **formal investigations completed during the period under review** (including investigations which completed during this period but started in a previous academic year). Information from ongoing investigations should not be submitted.

Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	Number of formal investigations	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld in full after formal investigation
Fabrication	0	0	0	0
Falsification	0	0	0	0
Plagiarism	0	0	0	0
Failure to meet legal, ethical, and professional obligations	1	1	0	0
Misrepresentation (e.g. data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	1	0	0	0
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	1	1	0	0
Other*	0	0	0	0
Total:	3	2	0	0

***If you listed any allegations under the 'Other' category, please give a brief, high-level summary of their type here. Do not give any identifying or confidential information when responding.**

n/a